

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in this application. Added text is indicated by underlining, and deleted text is indicated by ~~strikethrough~~.

1. (Currently amended) A method of dispensing a prescription drug to a customer, the method comprising:

identifying a particular customer's prescription to fill, said prescription authorized by a medical professional;

~~receiving a prescription for a particular customer from an authorized medical professional;~~

choosing from an inventory of drugs a prescription drug to fill the prescription;

creating a finished prescription by filling the particular customer's prescription with the chosen prescription drug; and

associating the drug with the particular customer;

placing the finished prescription in a random location within a computer controlled dispenser[[,;]]

~~automatically associating the finished prescription with a random location in the dispenser after the finished prescription is placed in the dispenser; and the dispenser connected to a computer, the computer~~

identifying the finished prescription and controlling the dispenser to dispense the finished prescription to the particular customer upon demand.

2. (Cancel)

3. (Currently amended) The method of claim [[21]], wherein controlling the dispenser comprises retrieving translating the finished prescription from the random location to a dispense point in the dispenser.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising identifying the customer utilizing an identification reader.

5. (Original) The method of claim 4, wherein utilizing an identification reader comprises utilizing a magnetic stripe card reader.

6. (Currently amended) The method of claim 4, wherein utilizing an identification reader comprises utilizing a reader selected from a group consisting of a fingerprint reader, a retinal scanner, a credit card reader, and a barcode reader.

7. (Original) The method of claim 4, further comprising verifying an identity of the customer utilizing a password.

8. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising: identifying the customer utilizing a user name identifying information; and verifying an identity of the customer utilizing a password.

9. (Currently amended) The method of claim 8, wherein the user identifying information is selected from a group consisting of a user name, a password, a prescription number, a birth date, a social security number, and a personal identification number. 1, further comprising: identifying the customer utilizing a prescription number; and verifying an identity of the customer utilizing a password.

10. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising electronically recording a signature of the customer to purchase the finished prescription.

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11. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising photographing the customer during interaction with the dispenser.

12. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1, further comprising utilizing the computer to maneuver a picker assembly throughout the dispenser, and wherein the picker assembly dispenses the finished prescription to the customer.

13. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising verifying the dispensing of the finished prescription.

14. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1, further comprising labeling the finished prescription with at least one of a barcode and an electronic identification tag correlating the customer to the finished prescription.

15. (canceled)

16. (canceled)

17. (canceled)

18. (canceled)

19. (canceled)

20. (canceled)

21. (canceled)

22. (canceled)

23. (canceled)

24. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 15, further comprising utilizing the computer to maneuver a picker assembly throughout the automated storage facility, and wherein the picker assembly dispenses the container to the customer.

25. (canceled)

26. (canceled)

27. (New) A method of delivering a customer-specific, pharmacy-filled prescription to a customer comprising:

providing an automated prescription dispenser, said dispenser comprising a computer, a controller, and a three-dimensional array of unique storage locations, each storage location capable of storing a different, customer-specific, pharmacy-filled prescription;

randomly placing a customer-specific, pharmacy-filled prescription into an available storage location, said customer-specific, pharmacy-filled prescription coupled with identifying information associating the prescription with a specific customer;

using said identifying information to associate the randomly-placed, customer-specific, pharmacy-filled prescription with an unique storage location within the dispenser;

controlling the dispenser to locate and deliver the customer-specific, pharmacy-filled prescription from its random storage location after said customer has interfaced with the dispenser and requested delivery.

28. The method of claim 27, wherein the pharmacy filled prescription is a prescription that has been filled by a licensed pharmacist.

29. (New) The method of claim 27, wherein said controlling step further comprises retrieving the customer-specific, pharmacy-filled prescription from the random location in the dispenser.

30. (New) The method of claim 27, further comprising identifying the customer utilizing an identification reader.

31. (New) The method of claim 30, wherein utilizing an identification reader comprises utilizing a magnetic stripe card reader.

32. (New) The method of claim 30, wherein utilizing an identification reader comprises utilizing a reader selected from a group consisting of a fingerprint reader, a retinal scanner, a credit card reader, and a barcode reader.

33. (New) The method of claim 30, further comprising verifying an identity of the customer utilizing a password.

34. (New) The method of claim 27, further comprising identifying the customer utilizing an user identifying information.

35. (New) The method of claim 27, wherein the user identifying information is selected from a group consisting of a user name, a password, a prescription number, a birth date, a social security number, and a personal identification number.

36. (New) The method of claim 27, further comprising electronically recording a signature of the customer before delivering the finished prescription.

37. (New) The method of claim 27, further comprising photographing the customer during interaction with the dispenser.

38. (New) The method of claim 27, wherein said dispenser further comprises a retrieving assembly, and said controlling step further comprises the computer causing the retrieving assembly to maneuver throughout the dispenser to locate and deliver the customer-specific, pharmacy-filled prescription to the customer.

39. (New) The method of claim 38, wherein the retrieving assembly is a picker assembly.

40. (New) The method of claim 27, further comprising the step of verifying that the correct pharmacy-filled, customer-specific prescription is delivered to the correct customer.

41. (New) The method of claim 27, wherein the customer-specific, pharmacy-filled prescription is labeled with at least one of a barcode and an electronic identification tag correlating the customer to the pharmacy-filled, customer-specific prescription.

42. (New) The method of claim 41, wherein said label is used to associate said customer-specific, pharmacist filled prescription with said unique storage location.

43. (New) The method of claim 27, further comprising the step of placing said customer-specific, pharmacy-filled prescription into a storage container before placement into the automated dispenser.

44. (New) The method of claim 43, further comprising placing on the container at least one of a barcode and an electronic identification tag correlating the customer to the pharmacy-filled, customer-specific prescription placed therein.

45. (New) The method of claim 43, wherein said container is a bag.

46. (New) The method of claim 45, wherein said dispenser further comprises a picker assembly, and said controlling step further comprises the computer causing the picker assembly to maneuver throughout the dispenser to locate and deliver the container and the pharmacy-filled, customer-specific prescription to the customer.

47. (New) The method of claim 27, wherein a plurality of distribution trays are housed within the dispenser.

48. (New) The method of claim 47, wherein at least one distribution tray is used to house a plurality of unique storage locations.

49. (New) The method of claim 48, wherein at least one of the distribution trays further comprises a plurality of parallel notches defining the unique storage locations.

50. (New) The method of claim 47, wherein at least one distribution tray is removable from said dispenser.

51. (New) The method of claim 47, wherein the customer specific pharmacy-filled prescriptions are placed at least one of the plurality of distribution trays, and then the distribution trays are placed in the dispenser.

52. (New) The method of claim 51, further comprising the step of placing said customer-specific, pharmacy-filled prescription into a storage container before placement into the distribution tray.

53. (New) The method of claim 52, further comprising placing on the storage container at least one of a barcode and an electronic identification tag correlating the customer to the pharmacy-filled, customer-specific prescription placed therein.

54. (New) The method of claim 53, wherein said storage container is a bag.

55. (New) The method of claim 54, wherein said barcode label is placed substantially near the top of the bag.

56. (New) The method of claim 27, wherein said computer is located remotely from said dispenser.

57. (New) The method of claim 27, wherein said dispenser is located in a pharmacy.

58. (New) The method of claim 27, wherein said dispenser is located remotely from a pharmacy.

59. (New) The method of claim 58, further comprising the step of moving a previously stored, customer specific, pharmacy-filled prescription from one unique storage location located within the dispenser to another unique storage location located within the dispenser.

60. (New) The method of claim 27, wherein said pharmacy-filled, customer specific prescription is stored among hundreds of other customer-specific, pharmacy-filled prescriptions within the dispenser.

61. (New) A method of delivering a pharmacy-filled prescription to a customer, wherein the pharmacy-filled prescription is associated with identifying information associating the prescription with a specific customer; the method comprising:

providing an automated prescription dispenser, said dispenser comprising a controller, and a plurality of unique storage locations, a first axis, a second axis, and a third axis, wherein said storage locations are each capable of storing unique, pharmacy-filled prescriptions associated with different specific customers, wherein a

plurality of unique storage locations are located in the plane formed by the first axis and the second axis, a second plurality of unique storage locations are located in the plane formed by the first axis and the third axis, and a third plurality of unique storage locations are located in the plane formed by the second axis and the third axis;

placing a customer-specific, pharmacy-filled prescription at a random storage location within the dispenser;

allowing a customer access to the dispenser;

using the specifically associated identifying information to locate the customer-specific, pharmacy-filled prescription stored for the particular customer accessing the dispenser;

controlling the dispenser to deliver the customer-specific, pharmacy-filled prescription from its unique storage location to the accessing customer.

62. (New) The method of claim 61, wherein the pharmacy filled prescription is a prescription that has been filled by a licensed pharmacist.

63. (New) The method of claim 61, wherein said controlling step further comprises retrieving the customer-specific, pharmacy-filled prescription from the random location in the dispenser.

64. (New) The method of claim 61, wherein said storage location is not assigned until after placement in the dispenser.

65. (New) The method of claim 61, further comprising identifying the customer utilizing an identification reader, the identification reader being part of the dispenser.

66. (New) The method of claim 65, wherein utilizing an identification reader comprises utilizing a magnetic stripe card reader.

67. (New) The method of claim 65, wherein utilizing an identification reader comprises utilizing a reader selected from a group consisting of a fingerprint reader, a retinal scanner, a credit card reader, and a barcode reader.

68. (New) The method of claim 65, further comprising verifying an identity of the customer utilizing a password.

69. (New) The method of claim 61, further comprising identifying the customer utilizing an user identifying information.

70. (New) The method of claim 69, wherein the user identifying information is selected from a group consisting of a user name, a password, a prescription number, a birth date, a social security number, and a personal identification number.

71. (New) The method of claim 61, further comprising electronically recording a signature of the customer before delivering the customer-specific, pharmacy-filled prescription.

72. (New) The method of claim 61, further comprising photographing the customer during interaction with the dispenser.

73. (New) The method of claim 61, wherein said dispenser further comprises a translating assembly, and said controlling step further comprises the computer causing the translating assembly to maneuver throughout the dispenser to locate and deliver the customer-specific, pharmacy-filled prescription to the customer.

74. (New) The method of claim 73, wherein the translating assembly is a picker assembly.

75. (New) The method of claim 61, further comprising the step of verifying that the correct customer-specific, pharmacy-filled prescription is delivered to the correct customer.

76. (New) The method of claim 61, wherein the customer-specific, pharmacy-filled prescription is labeled with at least one of a barcode and an electronic identification tag correlating the customer to the customer-specific, pharmacy-filled prescription.

77. (New) The method of claim 76, wherein said label is used to associate said customer-specific, pharmacist filled prescription with said unique storage location.

78. (New) The method of claim 61, further comprising the step of placing said customer-specific, pharmacy-filled prescription into a storage container before placement into the automated dispenser.

79. (New) The method of claim 78, further comprising placing on the storage container at least one of a barcode and an electronic identification tag correlating the customer to the pharmacy-filled, customer-specific prescription placed therein.

80. (New) The method of claim 78, wherein said container is a bag.

81. (New) The method of claim 80, wherein said dispenser further comprises a picker assembly, and said controlling step further comprises the computer causing the picker assembly to maneuver throughout the dispenser to locate and deliver the container and the pharmacy-filled, customer-specific prescription to the customer.

82. (New) The method of claim 61, wherein a plurality of distribution trays are housed within the dispenser.

83. (New) The method of claim 82, wherein at least one of the plurality of distribution trays is used to house a plurality of unique storage locations.

84. (New) The method of claim 82, wherein at least one distribution tray is removable from said dispenser.

85. (New) The method of claim 84, wherein the pharmacy-filled, customer specific prescriptions are placed in the distribution tray, and then the distribution tray is placed in the dispenser.

86. (New) The method of claim 85, wherein at least one of the distribution trays further comprises a plurality of parallel notches defining the unique storage locations.

87. (New) The method of claim 85, further comprising the step of placing said customer-specific, pharmacy-filled prescription into a storage container before placement into the distribution tray.

88. (New) The method of claim 87, further comprising placing on the container at least one of a barcode and an electronic identification tag correlating the customer to the pharmacy-filled, customer-specific prescription placed therein.

89. (New) The method of claim 87, wherein said container is a bag.

90. (New) The method of claim 89, wherein said barcode label is placed substantially near the top of the bag.

91. (New) The method of claim 90, further comprising the step of moving a previously stored, customer specific, pharmacy-filled prescription from one unique storage location

located within the dispenser to another unique storage location located within the dispenser.

92. (New) The method of claim 61, wherein said computer is located remotely from said dispenser.

93. (New) The method of claim 61, wherein said dispenser is located in a pharmacy.

94. (New) The method of claim 61 wherein said dispenser is located remotely from a pharmacy.

95. (New) A method of delivering a pharmacy-filled prescription to a customer, wherein the pharmacy-filled prescription is associated with identifying information associating the prescription with a specific customer; the method comprising:

 providing an automated prescription dispenser, said dispenser comprising a computer, controller, and a plurality of unique storage locations, wherein said plurality of unique storage locations are arranged in a three-dimensional array, and said storage locations are each capable of storing unique, pharmacy-filled prescriptions substantially associated with different specific customers;

 placing a customer-specific, pharmacy-filled prescription at a random, unassigned storage location within the dispenser;

 using said identifying information to associate the randomly-placed, customer-specific, pharmacy-filled prescription with an unique storage location within the dispenser;

 allowing a customer access to the dispenser;

 using the specifically associated identifying information to locate the customer-specific, pharmacy-filled prescription stored for the particular customer accessing the dispenser;

controlling the dispenser to deliver the customer-specific, pharmacy-filled prescription from its unique storage location to the accessing customer.

96. (New) The method of claim 95, wherein the pharmacy filled prescription is a prescription that has been filled by a licensed pharmacist.

97. (New) A method of delivering a customer-specific, pharmacy-filled prescription to a customer comprising:

providing an automated prescription dispenser, said dispenser comprising a controller and a plurality of bins, each bin capable of storing a different, customer-specific, pharmacy-filled prescription;

randomly placing a customer-specific, pharmacy-filled prescription substantially into an available bin, said customer-specific, pharmacy-filled prescription containing identifying information associating the prescription with a specific customer;

associating the randomly-placed, customer-specific, pharmacy-filled prescription with the specific bin location within the dispenser where the customer-specific, pharmacy-filled prescription was placed;

identifying the randomly stored, customer-specific, pharmacy-filled prescription, after said customer has interfaced with the dispenser and requested delivery;

controlling the dispenser to deliver the customer-specific, pharmacy-filled prescription from its random storage location to the particular customer.

98. (New) The method of claim 97, wherein the pharmacy filled prescription is a prescription that has been filled by a licensed pharmacist.

99. (New) A method of delivering a customer-specific, pharmacy-filled prescription to a customer comprising:

providing an automated prescription dispenser, said dispenser comprising a controller and a plurality of trays, each tray capable of storing a plurality of different, customer-specific, pharmacy-filled prescription;

randomly placing a customer-specific, pharmacy-filled prescription into an available tray, said customer-specific, pharmacy-filled prescription containing identifying information associating the prescription with a specific customer;

after placement, using said identifying information to associate the customer-specific, pharmacy-filled prescription with a specific tray location within the dispenser;

identifying the randomly stored, customer-specific, pharmacy-filled prescription, after said customer has interfaced with the dispenser and requested delivery;

controlling the dispenser to deliver the customer-specific, pharmacy-filled prescription from its random storage location to the particular customer.

100. (New) The method of claim 99, wherein the pharmacy filled prescription is a prescription that has been filled by a licensed pharmacist.

101. (New) The method of claim 99, wherein the tray is removable from the dispenser.

102. (New) The method of claim 101, further comprising the step of placing the customer-specific, pharmacy-filled prescription substantially in the tray while the tray is removed from the dispenser.

103. (New) The method of claim 102, wherein the tray houses a plurality of unique storage locations.

104. (New) The method of claim 103, wherein the unique storage locations are defined by parallel v-shaped notches located on opposite sides of the trays.

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105. (New) The method of claim 104, further comprising the step of placing several customer-specific pharmacy-filled prescription substantially in the tray while the tray is removed from the dispenser, and then returning the tray to the dispenser when customer-specific, pharmacist filled prescriptions have been placed at all unique storage locations.

106. (New) The method of claim 105, wherein a tray contains customer-specific, pharmacy-filled prescriptions for different customers.